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HEALTH
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ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Medical Officer of Health and Sanitary Inspector

for the Rural District of Saint Ives

in the County of Huntingdon

for the year ending 31st December, 1944.

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To the Chairman and Members of the Saint Ives
Rural District Council.

Mr. Chairman, and Gentlemen,

The Ministry of Health has requested that the Report for 1944 should be prepared on the lines for that of 1943 and it has, therefore, been drawn up with that object in mind.

The restrictions previously imposed on the publication of population figures in Annual Reports have now been removed and such figures are, once more, included.

Whilst the greater part of the work of the department was routine, 1944, was in effect a year of preparation.

Preliminary work, in connection with the Councils schemes for Housing, Water Supply, Sewerage and Public Cleansing, proceeded and continues to receive the closest attention.

I am,

Mr. Chairman and Gentlemen,

Your Obedient Servant,

W.R. GROVE,
B.A.,M.D.,B.Ch.,M.R.C.S.,L.R.C.P.

Medical Officer of Health.

PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICERS.

Medical Officer of Health;

W.R. GROVE, M.D., B.Ch., M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Sanitary Inspector;

G.H. PHIPPS,

Certificate of Sanitary Inspector's Joint Board,
Meat and Other Foods Certificate of Royal Sanitary Institute.

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STATISTICS AND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Population (mid 1944)	10,780
Area	45,911 acres
Rateable Value	£50,313
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£198
Number of Inhabited Houses (approximately) ...	3,115

Extracts from Vital Statistics for the Year.

		Total	M	F.	
Live Births	(Legitimate)	167	93	74	Birth-rate per 1000 of the estimated resident population ..... 17·1
	(Illegitimate)	18	8	10	
Still Births	(Legitimate)	2	2	0	Rate per 1000 ..... 0·027
	(Illegitimate)	1	0	1	
Deaths		156	80	76	Death-rate per 1000 of the estimated resident population ..... 14·5
Deaths (Infants under one year of age) (4 of which were illegitimate)		12	7	5	

There were no deaths from puerperal causes.

Death-rate of Infants under one year of age:-

All Infants per 1000 live births ..... 64·8

Deaths from Cancer (all ages)	...	23
" " Measles (all ages)	...	0
" " Whooping Cough (all ages)	...	0
" " Diarrhoea (under 2 yrs. of age)	...	2

As a comparison

the Birth rate for England and Wales during 1944 was:-	17·6	per 1000
Death rate " " " " " " "	11·6	" "
Deaths under one year:- " " " " "	46	" "

GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA.

Following the publication of the Hobhouse Report the Council decided to appoint an additional Sanitary Inspector to assist in the Rural Housing Survey and the general work of the department. After interview Mr. W.G. Munday was appointed and commenced his duties in February 1945.

There has been no change in the administration of the health services in the area during the year. There has been active co-operation between the County Council, as the Welfare Authority, and the District Council, as the Sanitary Authority, in all matters where joint action was considered to be most satisfactory and desirable.

SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES.

1.-(1) WATER.

The average rainfall in the area is approximately 21·7 inches per annum but the rainfall in the area during the year was low, only 17·69 inches being recorded. As this followed a year of abnormally low rainfall when only 14·21 inches were recorded it will be obvious that but for the public supply provided by the Council through the Ramsey & St. Ives and the Chesterton & St. Ives Joint Boards the shortage of water for drinking and domestic purposes would have been serious.

The following tables show the consumption of water in those parishes supplied by the two Joint Boards:-

	Ramsey & St. Ives Joint Board.	Chesterton & St. Ives Joint Board.
Total gallons supplied	38,307,000	11,329,000
Service Supplies	21,500,000	Nil
Nett amount used by other consumers	12,807,000	11,329,000
Daily average	35,087	31,038
Houses supplied	1,318	248
Other premises supplied	281	34

It will be observed that the consumption of water in Fenstanton and Hemingford Grey is almost equal to the amount used by the consumers in the parishes supplied by the Ramsey & St. Ives Joint Board, this is accounted for by the fact that there are a few industrial premises in the former parishes that take comparatively large quantities of water for trade purposes.

The consumption continues to show an upward trend and during the year, 23 houses and 34 other properties were connected to the existing mains; in addition, main extensions were carried out at Fenstanton, as a result of which a further 26 houses were connected to the supply.

Advantage continues to be taken by owners of the 50% grant given by the Ministry of Agriculture towards the cost of extending the supply to farms and farm cottages that were not previously connected to the Council's mains.

The supplies continue to be chlorinated and the quality has been generally satisfactory. 68 samples of water were taken during the year from different points on the main and submitted to the Emergency Public Health Laboratory at Cambridge for bacteriological examination. On two occasions the results showed that the mains required flushing and subsequent examination of the supply at the same points indicated that the treatment had been effective.

Early in the year the Council instructed their Engineers (Messrs. Howard Humphreys & Son) to prepare a scheme for a supply to Hilton which was feeling the effects of the drought.

The Engineers were of the opinion that the best method of supplying the parish would be by taking a supply from the Chesterton and St. Ives Joint Board's main at Fenstanton and submitted a scheme which was estimated to cost £9000.

The Ministry of Health, however, stated that the scheme could not be approved during the war owing to the acute shortage of labour and materials and that there would be no Exchequer Grant on any temporary scheme the Council might undertake.

Subsequent enquiry also showed that as the supply was primarily of a domestic nature it was improbable that any substantial grant would be given by the Ministry of Agriculture towards the scheme as a whole.

After consideration the Council decided to postpone the scheme until after the war.

When this scheme for Hilton is finally approved the Council will then be in a position to supply this parish and as the scheme for Hemingford Grey, Hemingford Abbots, Houghton and Wyton, has already been approved, every single parish in the district will have a main supply available. It is hoped that this ideal position will be achieved in the not too distant future.

There are a considerable number of shallow wells still in use and those parishes without a main supply are entirely dependent upon these.

13 samples of water were taken from such sources during the year, 9 of which were satisfactory. The remaining 4 supplies were considered by the Public Analyst to be unfit for drinking purposes and the householders were warned to boil the water before use. It was not possible to close the wells as in any case it was the only source of supply.

As a result of informal action by the department an increasing number of cottage properties are being connected to the Councils main after the owner has been advised that the cost of maintaining wells and pumps in a satisfactory condition is their responsibility.

1.-(2) DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE.

The County Council instructed their Engineers (Messrs. Pick Everard and Gimson) to prepare a preliminary report on sewerage schemes for those parishes in the County in which such schemes were necessary.

The report was received by the Council and it appeared that the Engineers were of opinion that some, at least, of the parishes surrounding the Borough of St. Ives could be dealt with more economically and expeditiously by a joint scheme with the Borough.

A joint Committee was formed consisting of members of both Councils to consider the position and if necessary seek further advice from consulting engineers.

The remaining parishes can be linked together in some cases, whilst in others, separate disposal plants will be necessary. Until a detailed report is available the schemes cannot be considered with the necessary detail to ensure that the best is adopted, but it is the policy of the Council to carry out such sewerage schemes when labour and materials are more readily available.

The urgent necessity for comprehensive sewerage schemes is increasing, especially so, when it is realised that every new Council house, and probably every new house built by private enterprise, will all be designed to dispose of sewage by means of the water carriage system.

2. RIVERS AND STREAMS.

There have been no complaints during the year from the River Great Ouse Catchment Board or other persons, of any pollution to the River Ouse, due to circumstances arising in the district.

The active policy of the Council in maintaining minor water courses, which are their responsibility, in a satisfactory condition, has continued during the year. Wherever possible advantage has been taken of the 50% grant towards the cost of the work which in certain circumstances is available from the Ministry of Agriculture.

3.-(1) CLOSET ACCOMMODATION.

Although the shortage of labour and materials and the absence of a sewerage system restrict the conversion of pail closets to water closets, 21 such conversions were nevertheless carried out during the year and this work has shown a tendency to increase.

No cases were discovered where the sanitary accommodation was insufficient, a separate closet being provided for each house that has been inspected and recorded.

Nightsoil is collected once a week from Bluntisham-cum-Earith, Somersham and Warboys.

The work is carried out by contractors, the Council providing the vehicles. A scheme for the collection of nightsoil from every parish was submitted to the Council by the department. The Council, after consideration of the report, decided not to proceed with the scheme for the present.

3.-(2) PUBLIC CLEANSING AND SALVAGE.

After consideration of a report by the Department on the existing arrangements for the collection of refuse and salvage, the Council decided to terminate their agreement with the Contractors after the acquisition of a suitable vehicle, and carry out the work by direct labour.

The choice of vehicles was limited and it was decided to purchase a Dennis 10 cubic yard refuse collection vehicle. This vehicle was not delivered before 1945, when the scheme finally came into operation, and it will be the subject of a fuller report in the annual report for that year.

The previous arrangements for the fortnightly collection of salvage and refuse by Contractors therefore continued during the year; the refuse being tipped at Earith and the salvage sorted and baled at St. Ives.

Joint use of premises and labour for the storage, sorting and baling of materials with the Borough of St. Ives continued during the year to the mutual advantage of both Councils.

At the request of the Ministry of Supply a Book Drive was organised during the year, the collection being carried out by the school children, with the active co-operation of the teachers. More than 3,000 books were despatched to the services, and 6 tons of paper to the pulping mills, as a result of the Drive. During the year approximately 74 tons of materials were salvaged, and sold at controlled prices, for the sum of £359.

The following table shows the weights of the more important materials collected:-

	Tons.	Cwts.	Qtrs.		Tons.	Cwts.	Qtrs.
Scrap iron	25.	16.	1.	Paper	35.	14.	2.
Bones	6.	14.	1.	Textiles	6.	19.	1.

3.-(3) SANITARY INSPECTION OF AREA.

Total Number of Inspections for all purposes 1689

(a) HOUSING INSPECTIONS.

Under Public Health and Housing Acts	231
Reinspections	91
Number of Informal Notices Served	55
Number of Informal Notices complied with	42
Number of Statutory Notices Served	3
Number of Statutory Notices Complied with	3

The year was one of difficulty owing to the shortage of labour and materials. There was practically no improvement in the cottage property in the area, as most of the work carried out by the owners, consisted of urgent repairs that were necessary to prevent any further deterioration of the premises.

Informal notices were only served where it was considered that danger to health was likely unless the repairs or improvements required were carried out as soon as possible.

Three Statutory Notices were served during the year, and the work was completed by the Owners within the time allowed.

(b) INSPECTIONS UNDER THE FACTORIES ACT, 1937.

Number of Factory Inspections	79
Number of Written Notices Served	10
Number of Occupiers Prosecuted	Nil.

The bakehouses in the area have been maintained in a satisfactory condition during the year, and a new lavatory was provided at one bakehouse, which replaced a pail closet.

Routine inspections of factories showed that, generally speaking, they were maintained in a satisfactory manner, and no notifications of any infringements were reported to the department by the District Inspector of Factories.

(c) INSPECTIONS UNDER REGULATIONS, ETC.

Cowsheds and Dairies	...	124
Butchers Premises	...	132
Slaughterhouses	...	11
Meat from outside District	...	45
Food Premises	...	117
Offensive Trades	...	13
Shops	...	29
General Public Health Visits	...	98
Schools	...	3
Pumps, Wells	...	47
Tents, Vans and Sheds	...	25
Dumps, Tips	...	115
After Infectious Disease	...	14
Drains	...	94
Civil Defence	...	4
Evacuation	...	86
Salvage	...	226
Petroleum Stores	...	8
Hostels	...	1
Site Inspections	...	36
Miscellaneous	...	60

The visits and inspections made to the above premises were carried out under the provisions of the various Acts and Regulations that are administered by the Council.

Informal Notices were served on the occupiers of premises drawing attention to infringements of the law, or requesting the abatement of nuisances. The table gives a general picture of the work of the department during the 12 months and indicates the wide scope of the work.

An ever increasing number of Regulations and Orders made under the Defence (General) Regulations continued to be issued during the year, a large number of which were not the direct concern of the Public Health Department, but on which, nevertheless occupiers frequently asked for additional information.

3.-(4) CAMPING SITES.

No licences were issued during the year in respect of sites for camping, but 5 licences were issued for the placing and use of moveable dwellings in the area under Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936. No special conditions were attached to the licences other than those to ensure that the sanitary conditions of the dwelling and the site were maintained in a satisfactory condition.

3.-(5) SHOPS AND OFFICES - (6) SMOKE ABATEMENT - (7) SWIMMING BATHS.

There is nothing of interest to report under the above headings.

3.-(8) ERADICATION OF BED BUGS.

The bed bug has made an unwelcome appearance in the district and although only one house was found to be infested in 1944 complaints have since been received of infestations in other houses which have been confirmed.

In every case so far investigated it has been found that the house had previously been occupied by persons who had moved into the district from bombed areas, and who had brought their own bedding, cots and furniture with them.

As the type of property infested is very old and in some cases thatched, it will be seen that the complete disinfestation of the houses will be very difficult. Every effort has been made to eradicate the bugs by means of blow lamp, mist spraying of "Mat a fly" and "Lawvercide", and the use of "Thermator" fumigators.

The householders have co-operated in every way, and whilst complete success has not yet been achieved, the numbers still remaining have been considerably reduced.

PREVALENCE AND CONTROL OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE.

	Total cases notified.	Admitted to Hospital.	Deaths.
Scarlet Fever	7	4	-
Pneumonia	11	-	4
Erysipelas	4	-	-
Puerperal Pyrexia	5	-	-
Diphtheria	0	-	-
Enteric	0	-	-
Whooping Cough	22	-	-
Measles	32	-	-
Poliomyelitis	1	1	-
Jaundice	8	-	-

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION.

During the year 69 children under 5 years, and 3 between 5-15 were immunized by the County Medical Officer of Health's Staff.

In the middle of the year there were 808 children under 5, and 1,563 aged 5-14 (inclusive) in the district.

TUBERCULOSIS.

AGE PERIOD.	New Cases				Deaths			
	Pulmonary		Non-Pul.		Pulmonary		Non-Pul.	
	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F
0	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
5	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
10	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
15	...	1	2	...	...	...	...	...
20	...	2	...	...	...	...	...	...
25	...	2	...	...	2	1	...	...
35	...	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
45	2	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
55	1	...	...	...	2	...	...	...
65 and upwards ...	1	...	...	...	...	...	...	...
TOTALS	5	5	2	0	4	1	0	0

HOUSING.

1. Inspection of Dwelling-houses during the year:-

(1) (a) Total number of dwelling-houses inspected for housing defects (under Public Health or Housing Acts)	231
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	322
(2) (a) Number of dwelling-houses (included under sub-head (1) above) which were inspected and recorded under the Housing Consolidated Regulations, 1925 and 1932. ...	32
(b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ...	40
(3) Number of dwelling-houses found to be in a state so dangerous or injurious to health as to be unfit for human habitation ...	2
(4) Number of dwelling-houses (exclusive of those referred to under the preceding sub-head) found not to be in all respects reasonably fit for human habitation	60

2. Remedy of defects during the Year without Service of formal notices:-

Number of defective dwelling-houses rendered fit in consequence of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers ...	29

3. Action under Statutory Powers during the Year:-

(a)-Proceedings under Sections 9,10 and 16 of the Housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring repairs ...	0
(2) Number of dwelling-houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices:	
(a) By owners	0
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	0
(b)-Proceedings under Public Health Acts:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied	31
(2) Number of dwelling-houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices:-	
(a) By owners	31
(b) By Local Authority in default of owners	0
(c)-Proceedings under Sections 11 and 13 of the Housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of dwelling-houses in respect of which Demolition Orders were made ...	2
(2) Number of dwelling-houses demolished in pursuance of Demolition Orders ...	0
(d)-Proceedings under Section 12 of the housing Act, 1936:	
(1) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were made	0
(2) Number of separate tenements or underground rooms in respect of which Closing Orders were determined, the tenement or room having been rendered fit	0

Housing Act, 1939 - Part IV. Overcrowding.

(a)-(i)	Number of dwellings overcrowded at the end of the year	8
(ii)	Number of families dwelling therein ...	8
(iii)	Number of persons dwelling therein ...	52
(b)-(i)	Number of new cases of overcrowding reported during the year	1
(c)-(i)	Number of cases of overcrowding relieved during the year	1
(ii)	Number of persons concerned in such cases	12
(d)-	Particulars of any cases in which dwelling-houses have again become overcrowded after the Local Authority have taken steps for the abatement of overcrowding ...	0

(e) The four houses allocated to the district for erection under the Emergency Housing Scheme for agricultural workers were completed during the year, and this brings the total number of Council houses in the district to 418.

The publication of the Hobhouse Report on Rural Housing resulted in the formation of a Joint County Committee consisting of Members of every Rural District in the County and representatives of the County Council.

It is hoped that this Committee will establish uniform methods of classification and inspection of all the cottage property in the County.

As suggested in the Report, a Technical Sub-Committee was appointed at the end of the year to make a detailed report and recommendations on the standard of fitness that should be arrived at in every house, and this "standard" has since been completed and approved by the Joint Committee.

The selection of sites in the district for the erection of houses in the post-war period occupied much time. In every case Parish Councils were consulted and in most instances their recommendations were adopted. By the end of the year the Council had approved sites in practically every village in the district, but these sites had not then been approved by the other departments concerned, such as the Ministry of Town and Country Planning, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Health.

The position with regard to Slum Clearance and Overcrowding remained the same, but the majority of the 77 houses represented to the Council as unfit between 1939 and 1945 are still standing and occupied. Only 6 of these have been repaired and reconditioned, whilst a further 9 had been demolished up to the end of the year.

The remaining 62 have greatly deteriorated, but temporary licences for the re-occupation of these houses are issued by the Council when they become vacant in an endeavour to utilise all housing accommodation available in the district.

INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD.

(a) MILK SUPPLY.

Number of Registered Cowkeepers	101
" " Cowsheds and Dairies	103
" " Registered Retailers	45
" " Visits to Cowsheds and Dairies	124
" " Contraventions found	12
" " Contraventions remedied	10
" " Premises found to require cleansing	10
" " Premises found to require structural alteration	4

Three applications for the registration of wholesale producers were received during the year and were granted by the Council. One application for the registration of new premises for the sale of milk by retail was also granted. There are 14 accredited producers and 4 attested herds in the area, but practically all the Tuberculin Tested milk produced from these latter herds is sold by wholesale and is retailed outside the district.

There is one pasteurising plant in the area and a licence in respect of the plant, authorising the sale of the milk under the special designation "Pasteurised" was renewed at the beginning of the year.

The plant is designed for the short-time high temperature process and is entirely automatic.

Eight samples of milk were taken after pasteurisation and submitted to the Public Analyst for bacteriological examination and the Phosphatase Test.

The reports by the Analyst indicated that the milk satisfied the conditions prescribed under the Milk (Special Designations) Orders.

A supplementary licence authorising the use of the special designation "Pasteurised" in relation to milk retailed in the area was granted to a firm operating a short-time high temperature plant which is licensed in aother district.

Complaints were received regarding the condition of churns returned from service establishments and the position was improved after representations had been made to the persons concerned.

Whilst the statutory obligation for the administration of the Milk & Dairies Orders remains with the Council, close co-operation was nevertheless maintained with the War Agricultural Executive Committee. Simultaneous visits were made to registered premises in practically every instance where complaints were received regarding the condition of the premises and the quality of the milk.

(b) MEAT AND OTHER FOODS.

Number of Butchers Shops	14 lbs.
Visits to Butchers Shops	132 lbs.
Number of Licensed Slaughterhouses	11 lbs.
Visits to Slaughterhouses	14 lbs.
Total weight of meat seized	Nil lbs.
Total weight of meat voluntarily surrendered and destroyed	744 lbs.

The meat condemned as unfit for human consumption was inspected in butchers shops and was subsequently destroyed. The meat sold in the area continues to be slaughtered at Government controlled slaughterhouses situated outside the district. The occasional slaughtering of pigs occurs at the licensed slaughterhouses in the area, under Ministry of Food permits, and the slaughterhouses continue to be licensed for this purpose.

In addition to the meat condemned, the following articles of food were destroyed or utilised as food for animals after being inspected and found to be unfit for human consumption:-

22 tins meat	33 lbs.	91 tins milk	86 lbs.
5 tins vegetables	5 lbs.	2 tins fish	2 lbs.
Smoked and wet fish	544 lbs.		

The comparatively large quantity of fish condemned was due to delay in transit at the time when the railways were congested with military traffic in June.

The Salvage Department of the Ministry of Food was informed when necessary of other articles of food such as bacon and fats, which were subsequently returned to the manufacturers, and dealt with by the Ministry of Food's own organisation.

(c) ADULTERATION.

The County Council administer the provisions of the Food and Drugs Act, 1936, relating to the adulteration of food. No special circumstances arose where it was considered that action could be taken by the Council.

(d) CHEMICAL AND BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF FOOD.

The only food submitted to the Public Analyst (Dr. Greenburgh) for bacteriological examination, was milk.

The results of the examination of the samples showed that they were satisfactory, and have been commented upon under the section of the report dealing with the milk supply.

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